Ban Cigarets? Farmers Would Suffer, Government Tax Take Would Nosedive

News Commentary

By OVID A. MARTIN
Associated Press Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — What would happen to the economy if the government banned cigarets?

It's not likely to happen.

MARTIN

Since at present the government has no authority to move against cigarets for any effect they may have on health.

Surgeon General LeRoy E. Burney last week warned that the weight of evidence implicates smoking as the main cause of a rising rate of lung cancer, but he has no power to ban smoking even if he favored such a move. Industry spokesmen attacked Burney's warning as a warmed over rehash of old statistics.

But if the government did ban cigarets, the action would have several hefty consequences. For one thing it would paralyze a seven billion dollar industry. For another, it would take a painful bite from federal, state and local tax revenues.

While taking no sides on the cancer controversy, farm officials said Wednesday a drastic ban of cigarets would adversely affect three-quarters of a million farm families and thousands more workers now marketing, processing and selling tobacco products.

The Agriculture Department said taxes collected on tobacco products by federal, state and local governments will total $2,700,000,000 this year. Nearly two billion dollars of this goes to the federal government alone.

Subsidies paid tobacco growers under federal farm programs total less than 175 million dolars since the inception of those programs in the mid-thirities. These subsidies have been small compared to to those for other crops because production has been controlled more rigidly.

Tobacco manufacturers and the federal government would lose more in total dollars than would growers, who will receive an estimated $1,100,000,000 for their tobbaco this year.

Officials estimated that more than 40,000 wage earners would be thrown out of work in the industry. Their wages were estimated at more than $160,000,000 a year. Thousands of retail tobacco stores would be affected. Heavy losses would be sustained also in useless cigaret vending machines.

A ban on cigarets would affect an estimated 58 million smokers in this country. Officials estimate that an additional 12 million persons smoke cigars and eight million more smoke pipes or roll-your-own cigarets.

Officials emphasized, however, that there is no legal authority for banning cigarets or taking them off the market. Tobacco is not covered by the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act which provided authority for recent action by the Food and Drug Commission against tainted cranberries.

The commission has seized cigarets at times where they were represented to aid in reducing weight or to have some medical effect. But such action was based on grounds the cigarets were sold as drugs and were mislabeled.

THE MIAMI HERALD
Miami, Florida
December 3, 1959

A Few Kind Words for Tobacco

One of the big tobacco companies has been charged by the Federal Trade Commission with false advertising as to the superior efficacy of its filter in protecting smokers from tar and nicotine. The company insists that its advertising is true. True or false, such advertising probably does more than all the lung cancer drumbeaters in convincing the public that there is a danger in cigarettes from which it needs protection.

The tobacco companies have done all they can to offset what they believe is a fallacious propaganda that smoking may bring on dread disease. In their thesis that a connection between smoking and lung cancer has not been proven, they have recently had some support from *The Journal* of the American Medical Association. Yet day after day the millions spent on advertising by many cigarettes is put to the service of proving that there is a danger but that the filter of such-and-such a cigarette reduces it most.

Hardly any company's advertising has taken a positive position in this matter. And there is a positive position. It could, indeed, be well argued that, since Sir Walter Raleigh introduced tobacco to the world, no new discovery has given so much pleasure to man with less proven harm. Of course, there are dangers in too much smoking. The doctors are increasingly insistent on the dangers of too much eating. But, though nobody ever beat his wife or drove his car in a lethal manner because he had smoked too much, more attention seems sometimes to be directed at the dangers of smoking than at the dangers of drinking.

Man is often foolish. He does many things that he ought not to do. But it is hard to believe that tobacco in a few centuries has come to world-wide acceptance if it has not given man a lot of pleasure in that time. And pleasure is not to be scorned in a world full of vexations and tensions. Indeed, those who sell the cigarettes, while not dismissing the possibility of danger from excess smoking, ought to be engaged in the praise of a product which has brought pleasure to simple people, has been enjoyed by many of the greatest thinkers since its introduction, and is now a source of relaxation and enjoyment by millions of far from foolish people, including probably a majority of doctors.

Perhaps this would have been a safer world if tobacco had never been discovered. That applies to alcohol, probably to pork. Recently a woman doctor in England added carbohydrates and sex to the list of things to be avoided in any desire for longevity. Certainly the automobile (regardless of the effects of its fumes on human lungs) has cut short the hopes of long life of many in our times.

We should not disregard the dangers of any of them, including tobacco. But there should be a few kind words about the pleasure in the poet's pipe, the physicist's cigarette, the poor man's smoke which tobacco has brought. And certainly the tobacco companies should be the first to praise that long and universal enjoyment and the last to try to persuade the public of the essentially dangerous qualities of tobacco by stressing safety belts they provide along with the boat ride. In advertising, the sea and the scenery, the pleasure and the relaxation should get more emphasis than the possible storm.

NEWS & OBSERVER
Raleigh, North Carolina
December 16, 1959

1003543536
1003543536 A

Source: https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/docs/gycm0000